

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1301

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STADIS////////////////////////////////////
FOR NEA ASS. SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR
REF: STATE 24924

1. THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO GIVE ME THE BACKGROUND WHICH
MAKES IT NECESSARY TO CONSIDER REPROGRAMMING POSITIONS IN
NEA. I CONFESS TO A CERTAIN FEELING OF CONCERN ABOUT THE

CHANCERY STAFF, SINCE WE HAVE TRIED TO CONDUCT OUR WORK HERE
OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS WITH FULL STAFFING FOR ONLY ONE,
REPEAT ONE, OF THOSE 12 MONTHS. DURING THE SUMMER VACATION/
TRANSFER SEASON, AND WITH THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF DISABLING
ILLNESS WE SEEM TO HAVE HERE, WE DO HAVE PERIODS WHEN MEETING
ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL LEVIES FROM THE DEPARTMENT
BECOMES RATHER DIFFICULT. I WILL BE PARTICULARLY WORRIED WHEN
WE HAVE MORE HIGH-LEVEL VISITS AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS AND
TRY TO COPE WITH THEM WITH A REDUCED STAFF. ALSO THE BASIC
CONTROL BY STATE OF OTHER MISSION ELEMENTS IS ADVERSELY
AFFECTED BY ANY EROSION IN OUR STATE STAFF.

2. DIRECTOR GENERAL DAVIS ENJOINED US TO AVOID (WHEN REOR-
GANIZATION OR REDUCTION MIGHT BECOME NECESSARY) THE TEMPT-
ATION OF ELIMINATING JUNIOR OR SUPPORT POSITIONS TO PRE-
SERVE THE MORE SENIOR OFFICERS. THIS, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS
SOUND ADVICE AND I DON'T WANT TO MAKE PERSONNEL DECISIONS HERE
WHICH WILL DEPRIVE YOUNGER OFFICERS OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO
GATHER VALUABLE EXPERIENCE NOR DO I WANT TO HAVE A CHIEF/
INDIAN SITUATION IN WHICH I HAVE TOO MANY SENIOR OFFICERS.

3. WITH THE ABOVE AS BACKGROUND, WE HAVE REVIEWED THE
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POSITION REDUCTIONS MENTIONED IN REFTEL AND I HAVE THE

FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

A) MEDICAL OFFICER POSITION AT KABUL HOSPITAL: WE ARE ABLE TO RELEASE THIS POSITION,

B) GENERAL SERVICES POSITION: I DO NOT FEEL THAT IS POSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE AN AMERICAN POSITION IN GENERAL SERVICES. AS S/IG POINTED OUT THIS SUMMER IN OUR INSPECTION, THE SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN KABUL IN GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS WERE DUE PRINCIPALLY TO INADEQUATE AMERICAN STAFFING AND INADEQUACIES OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES.

WE ARE JUST COMING TO THE POINT AFTER SIX MONTHS OF HARD WORK WHERE WE CAN BEGIN COPING WITH GENERAL SERVICES PROBLEMS WHICH VERGED UPON THE SCANDALOUS. WE CANNOT HOLD THE GROUND WE HAVE WON WITHOUT HAVING AN ADEQUATE AMERICAN STAFF TO SUPERVISE THE LOCAL STAFF. THIS IS A FACT OF LIFE HERE WHICH HAS BEEN CONFIRMED ALSO BY EXPERIENCE IN THE AID MISSION. IN SHORT, ANY REDUCTION IN OUR AMERICAN GENERAL SERVICES STAFF WOULD RISK FUTURE SCANDALS, AND I THEREFORE THINK IT WOULD BE A GRAVE MISTAKE TO CUT BACK THIS AREA OF THE EMBASSY.

C) WITH RESPECT TO THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL POSITION, LET ME JUST MAKE TWO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

FIRST, THE EXTENSION OF SIZEABLE CREDITS TO AFGHANISTAN FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY FROM OIL-PRODUCING STATES, HAS CREATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN EXPORTS. WE ARE ALREADY WITNESSING A SURGE IN INQUIRIES FROM U.S. FIRMS, INCLUDING SUCH LARGE OUTFITS AS BECHTEL, BOEING AND HAWAIIAN AGRONOMICS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT PRIORITY STATE AND COMMERCE ATTACH THESE DAYS TO EXPORT PROMOTION IN A COUNTRY LIKE AFGHANISTAN, BUT I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT YOUR STAFF CONSIDER THE COMMERCIAL IMPLICATIONS BEFORE DECIDING TO CUT BACK ON THIS AREA OF OUR OPERATIONS.

SECONDLY, ONE OF OUR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION'S KEY FUNCTIONS IS LIAISON WITH GUR AID MISSION AND THE SUPPLYING OF INDEPENDENT ADVISE TO ME ON POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA. THE SIZE OF OUR AID MISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALREADY MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE, IS GOING TO GROW AS A RESULT OF THE NEW PROGRAMS IN THE HELMAND VALLEY NOW BEING DEVELOPED, AND THE LIAISON JOB WILL BE MORE COMPLICATED AND TIME-CONSUMING BECAUSE TRAVEL TO THE HELMAND ZILL BE REQUIRED.

IF, DESPITE THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH I THINK ARGUE AGAINST REDUCING OUR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL STAFF, IT BACOMES NECESSARY TO DO SO, I WOULD THEN RECOMMEND ELIMINATION OF THE

POSITION OF ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND CREATION OF A POLITICAL/
ECONOMIC COUNSELOR WITH BROAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS, POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THE ALL-IMPORTANT LIAISON
WITH AID/ THE RESULT WOULD BE A POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION
HEADED BY A COUNSELOR WITH THREE MIDDLE-GRADE AND JUNIOR
OFFICERS (CLASSES 4,5, AND 6). SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WILL
REQUIRE A CLASS 4 ECONOMIC OFFICER WITH THE TECHNICAL SKILLS
TO HANDLE THE SPECIAL SIDE OF ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL WORK.
STRONG LANGUAGE ABILITY IS ALSO A NECESSITY.

4. WITH REGARD TO PARAGRAPH 9 OF REFTTEL, A COMPARISON OF
NUMBERS OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES AVAILABLE TO KABUL AS COMPARED, FOR
EXAMPLE, TO SOME OF OUR NEIGHBORING POSTS WILL MAKE IT CLEAR,
I THINK, THAT WE ARE VERY SHORT ON LOCAL POSITIONS. I HOPE
IT WON'T BE NECESSARY TO HIT US IN THAT AREA. THE S/IG
INSPECTION, INCIDENTALLY, SEEMED TO MAKE IT CLEAR KABUL
NEEDS ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS.

6. I HOPE THAT OUR FLEXIBILITY HERE ON TWO AMERICAN
POSITIONS WILL BE HELPFUL. I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT TWO
POSITIONS ARE THE MAXIMUM THAT SHOULD WISELY BE REPROGRAMMED,
AND WOULD STRONGLY PREFER ONLY ONE. I WOULD BE GLAD TO
DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER IN THIS CHANNEL IF THAT WOULD
SEEM USEFUL.

7. REGARDS.
ELIOT

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